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*Transcribed by Marilyn Hunting, April 2003*

Kathleen Irving (KI): This is Kathi Irving. Today is the eighth of February 2002. I'm with Phil Martin at his home at 335 North 2500 West.

Philip Martin (Phil): I built that cabin up in Flaming Gorge Acres in 1960 and Fran Feltch and his wife, Jennie, were our neighbors. We had Charles Henderson and Spot (Orlan) Johnson [Chuck and Lillian Henderson and Spot and Eddie Johnson]. We were real close. We did a lot of hunting and fishing and entertaining together for several years. It's like those were about the only people that I associated with. Anyway, I gave the cabin up there to Kim [Barton, his granddaughter], she has it now. I haven't been up there for several years. We used to stay up there a lot, my wife and I, in the summertime.

KI: How about telling me about your childhood? Were you born here?

Phil: I was born here, in that big brick house next to Inkley's, that was my dad's. My dad built that. [The house is located at 163 North Vernal Avenue.]

KI: What was your dad's name?

Phil: Manfred Robert Martin. He was a doctor. He graduated from Northwestern University. He had a brother that was a medical doctor back there, too. But anyway, I was born in a little house there on the corner of that lot, while they were building that house, and then lived there.

KI: You might not remember, but was that little house a hotel at that time? They had a maternity home there at the time.

Phil: No, it was a little log cabin, because the logs we finally took down to the ranch and built a house down there with them. When I was a kid, I used to carry coal up to the telephone office. The telephone office was up in a room in the Co-op building, upstairs. Merle Massey and Jennie Parker had a bed up there and I carried coal up to them. They stayed up there. They didn't live there, but they stayed there several hours. They had a cot there that they could rest on.

KI: Is that so that if somebody called in the middle of the night, they could make the connection?

Phil: Yes. There was just a small board. But anyway I carried this coal from underneath the Co-op around. I had it in a little wagon. On Saturdays I used to clean the washrooms in the Co-op, and I'd make enough to buy a box of .22 shells, then I'd go hunting for rabbits. My mother said she'd always cook whatever we got, and in these times, things were pretty rough. I used to kill pigeons down at the mill, the big flour mill.

KI: That would be Vernal Milling and Light?

Phil: Yes. That was down Fifth [Fourth] North and Vernal Avenue.

KI: What was your mom's name?

Phil: It was Ethel Maude Coon. She was a well-educated woman, and a wonderful cook. Didn't even know how to cook when my dad died, they had to have outside help. But she became a real wonderful cook.

KI: Did your dad die when you were young?

Phil: Yes, I was only four.

KI: How did he die?

Phil: He had heart failure. We had gone on a trip down to Louisiana to visit his brother and he died on the way back. Kim has some letters here between his brother, who was a physician there in the hospital back in Chicago, and he took care of my dad. She has a letter or two that come back and forth. And when we came back here, my mother took care of us. She opened the Martin Art and Novelty shop. She had a woman there who made hats. That's when the women wore these big hats with the flowers all over them.

KI: Do you remember who that was?

Phil: She was a sister of that fellow, what the hell was his name, she lives over at Brown's Park.

KI: I remember reading a story about a couple of ladies who either had millinery shops or worked for somebody who had a shop like that.

Phil: She had auburn hair, she was tall and she was single, Miss something, I used to call her, I can't remember. That was when Mrs. Ashton and Mrs. Hacking, all those women, had hats ordered and made, and she had that for several years.

KI: Tell me about your brothers and sisters. How many children?

Phil: Four boys, and I was the youngest of them. There's a picture up there of my mother and us boys.

KI: Tell me their names.

Phil: The oldest of them was Matthew Robert, he's named after my dad. The next one was Frances. He died here two or three years ago. He lived up there in Portland, Oregon, and then Duane, my brother next to me.

KI: That's a good looking group of boys. Your mom supported you with that shop, is that right?

Phil: Yes. We had sheep, too. That's why I never graduated from high school. In the spring I had to go out and help lamb, and I got into some rough deals in Colorado when the cowboys and sheepmen were fighting.

KI: Tell me a story about that.

Phil: Well, I was up on Blue Mountain when that sheepherder was killed. I was just eight years old. We'd gone up there to see our sheep when those cowboys killed this herder and killed all the sheep up there. We were over above Rangely, my brother and I. We were going up through the country in there, and these cowboys came up and told us they were going to kill us, and the sheep, too, if we kept going. My brother wasn't scared of anything, and he told them that he'd get some of them, so we went on sooner and we just got up on top when I saw a couple of guys coming on a trot. I told my brother, "Well, here they come again." And he just leaned the rifle against the upright in the tent. They said, "Is your name Martin?" And he said yes. And he said, "Well, you can lay over here and go through here if you want to and lay over a day or two if you need to." Si Bailey, he was a foreman for the Square S Cattle Outfit.

We found out later that he'd had tick fever, and they'd brought him down here to the Karren home, and my dad had saved him. It was his way of getting back, he was letting us through that cow country. We were the only ones that got through there. And I found out later, through that book of Doris Burton's, his wife had a baby over here and named it Manfred. They must've named it after my dad. He had several kids here in Vernal named after him.

KI: When were you born?

Phil: May 12, 1912.

KI: So this would've been in the early 1920s when these guys were being killed, these sheep guys. How long did you run sheep?

Phil: Oh, 1938.

KI: Did you go to Central School?

Phil: I got a picture here someplace of me in the first grade over to the Willcox Academy. I went to the first grade over there.

KI: Was Miss Stonecypher your teacher?

Phil: No, Miss Pryor, I think her name was.

KI: Did you stay at Willcox ?

Phil: No, just that first year. Then we, I, went to Central after that. I think that's when they quit first grade over there.

KI: Tell me about being in elementary school. What kind of games did you play?

Phil: Marbles. That was a big deal. I was quite a marble player. I had hundreds of marbles. My brother threw them all down the furnace, said I was too old to play marbles anymore. He just rolled them down the register.

KI: That's what happens when you're the little brother, I guess. What did you do in the winter, when you couldn't play marbles?

Phil: Well, I went hunting after school. Damn near every night, I'd go down to the mill and shoot pigeons. I'd go over through the Youngs' orchard. Youngs had a big orchard, down around where Ralph Siddoway's place is [673 North Vernal Avenue]. We'd go up through there, and there was a little lake up there, and we'd make that circle on school nights and then back home, and then on the weekends we'd go on out further and make a bigger circle. We'd usually get a rabbit or a duck, or something.

KI: I guess nobody made you get licenses to go hunting.

Phil: Oh, no, no. I used to fish over here in Remember the Maine [Park] and fill a basket with fish.

KI: What kind of fish were they?

Phil: Trout. Rainbow. Rainbow are natives.

KI: Did you ever go fishing for whitefish on the Green River?

Phil: No. Well, I've gone down there to fish catfish. I've fished a lot. I had the first boat on Flaming Gorge, down on the lower end. I caught several hundreds of those big macs.

KI: What kind were they?

Phil: Mackinaw. I got a picture of those in there.

KI: Were they pretty big fish, these macs?

Phil: Yeah. Fifteen, seventeen pounds.

KI: I bet that was exciting!

Phil: Oh yes, it sure was. My wife and I—she loved to fish and hunt, too; she was a good shot; I taught her to shoot—we used to hunt a lot and fish.

KI: Tell me who your friends were, who you went hunting with every day.

Phil: I'd be alone.

KI: I'm looking at these pictures of you with the fish. They are really big. Did you used to fry them up, or bake them, or what?

Phil: Barbeque 'em.

KI: (question to Kim, his granddaughter) Did you ever get to taste those?

Kim: Oh yes, filleted.

KI: That's a pretty good legacy to leave there.

Phil: Our friends were the Feltsches, the Hendersons, the Johnsons.

KI: Do you remember some of your friends when you were in school?

Phil: Not really. I played marbles with them, that was about it when I was in grade school.

KI: Did you go up to eighth grade at Central or did you only go to sixth?

Phil: I don't remember. As far as they'd go, I guess.

KI: And then did you go to high school at all?

Phil: Yes, to the junior year. But I had to quit in the spring, and that's why I never got through.

KI: Yes. You know, a lot of guys your age have told me the same thing, that they didn't quite make it through high school for different reasons. They either had to work or—one guy even told me that he had a funny hair cut and wouldn't go back to finish his senior year. So you have plenty of good company. What did you do, then, for a career?

Phil: Well, after the sheep, I went into the trucking business. I was in the trucking business for forty-three years, and I sold that out in the nineties.

KI: And was it called, Martin Trucking?

Phil: Yes, it was Phil Martin Trucking, in the oilfield.

Kim: Martin Water Service.

KI: How long have you lived here, in this house?

Phil: I built this house in 1956. Fran Feltsch built it. That's how come we were so close, he built

this house. And then Sam Hatch and I bought the Fred Bingham place. We sold it to Drollinger.

KI: Where is that?

Phil: It's on Vernal Avenue, out south there, about Seventh South.

KI: Well, how did you meet your wife?

Phil: Well, she was working in the confectionery. And we had the Grill Café, too. I forgot about that. It was right next to the Co-op. We had that. Finally moved it to Rock Springs. I had the night shifts on that. I was about sixteen, I guess, when I had that.

KI: Did you cook there?

Phil: Yes. I cooked. And my wife was working there. Don Hacking, he had Hacking Furniture Company, called one night and said, "We're going up to our sheep camp up in Coal Mine Basin and there's a girl that wants to meet you. We'll take you up there with us." So we went up there. She and Ellen Barr (Ellen Long) went up there. We started going together then. We went together for a couple, three years. Then we went to Rock Springs. Well, she moved over there. She worked for us there in the Grill. Then when we moved to Rock Springs she went over there, and that's where we were married. We were married in Linwood. That's under the lake now.

Another thing, I fed sheep out here where Steinaker Lake is and where the other lake is over on Brush Creek. I fed sheep where both are under those lakes now.

KI: Those weren't your sheep, that was just a job you had, to feed the sheep?

Phil: We had our sheep in with Witbeck's sheep.

KI: That's really interesting. What was your wife's name?

Phil: Lucy Jensen.

KI: Was she from Rock Springs?

Phil: No, she was from here.

KI: You just married her up there?

Phil: Yeah, we was married in Linwood.

KI: Why were you married in Linwood?

Phil: Utah didn't have the five-day waiting period at that time. Wyoming did.

KI: You just decided you had to get married right then, huh?

Phil: Yeah.

KI: Who married you?

Phil: A one-legged guy, his name, Allen. I dropped the damn ring. They just had a lantern, and I had trouble finding that. But his name was Allen, and he had one leg.

KI: Was he a justice of the peace or something?

Phil: Yes, that's what he was.

KI: When you decided to get married you just took care of it quickly, right?

Phil: Yes.

KI: How long were you married?

Phil: Sixty years, I think.

KI: A long time. How many children did you have?

Phil: Just one.

KI: It was a son?

Phil: Yes.

KI: What's his name?

Phil: Allen, he was named after Lawrence Allen.

KI: Can you tell me about what you used to do when you were a young man, with the community? Did you like to attend dances?

Phil: Yes, we went to dances. We had dances out in the wards then. We used to go to Ashley Ward. Ashley always had good ones. Maeser had pretty good ones. And Naples and Davis. Davis Ward had them, but they always had a bunch of fights out there.

KI: I've heard that. Whenever they'd have a dance, that was the big deal. If you didn't have a fight, it wasn't a real dance.

Phil: Yes, and of course, Roosevelt and Vernal used to fight back and forth.

KI: Why did they do that?

Phil: I don't know. That was just the way it was. Victory Park, they had dances over there, and there would always be a great big fight over there between Roosevelt and Vernal.

KI: Who played for the dances?

Phil: Oh, there was Bry Stringham, the first dances. Then Ken Richardson and Tom Karren.

KI: Do you remember Tex Ross?

Phil: Yes, but he was over west.

KI: Do you remember the Imperial Hall?

Phil: Oh, hell, yes.

KI: Tell me some of the things you went to over there.

Phil: We used to roller skate down there. My mother went down there and taught me to dance. She was quite a woman.

KI: Sounds like it.

Phil: She took me down there. That floor floated, you know. You'd get a big crowd on there and it was just smooth, smooth. I went to hundreds of dances down there.

KI: Kim, they had great big springs under that floor.

Phil: It was the Orpheus.

KI: And you remember when it was the Orpheus?

Phil: Oh yes, yes.

KI: Do you remember the theaters downtown?

Phil: There was only one. That was the old Vogue, there by the Vernal Drug, that's the only one there was for years.

KI: Did you go there when you were a kid?

Phil: Yeah. Hoot Gibson was a cowboy. Bill Hart. Bill Hart was the first one, I think. They was wild west movies. Those kids would yell out and say, "Look out, Hoot!"

KI: Didn't they used to have newsreels and different things at those movies?



Phil: Yes, there would be a newsreel. And there was a piano player. Mable Eaton played the piano down in the pit, she would play all during the show. There was no audio. It was all silent movies.

KI: Do you remember when they got talking movies?

Phil: Yes.

KI: Was that pretty exciting?

Phil: I went to school out in Salt Lake for a year, in 1928, I believe it was. I saw the Wings and I saw Al Jolson, who sang "Mammy." That was one of the first movies they had.

KI: I'll bet that was a real big thing, when that first came along. Can you remember celebrating holidays?

Phil: Yes, I can remember the first Armistice. There was just a flagpole in the center of town. Just a big pine pole. And they had the Kaiser hanging up there. And I remember Les Ashton, Ashton Hardware, his store was about where that Ben Franklin store is [100 block of Main Street], and he had an automatic pistol and he was just shooting it, round after round right up into that Kaiser. I might have been six. I remember Gene Franke come down and he got me on his bike. He was Doc Franke's boy. I can't remember, this could be the first, in 1918.

KI: Do you remember the bad flu?

Phil: Yes, everybody wore a mask.

KI: Did anyone in your family get it?

Phil: No. We wore masks, everybody. You'd go uptown and everybody had a mask on.

KI: Did they let kids go to school?

Phil: Yeah.

KI: So did you have to wear those masks during school?

Phil: Yeah, we had to wear that mask all the time.

KI: There were lots of people who died then, weren't there?

Phil: Oh, yes.

There was a Mormon church right there by the post office, in between the post office and that hotel. Set back in there, an old white building.

KI: What did they do with that?

Phil: I don't know. They tore it down, I guess. I slept in it one night.

KI: Why?

Phil: Well, the hotel bought it, and they let people sleep over there. Jimmy Long, his mother owned the hotel, and we'd been over to UBIG and we come home. It was late at night, and we just went in there and went to bed.

KI: You would probably have been about drinking age during Prohibition. Do you remember that?

Phil: Oh, gosh, yes.

KI: What do you remember about it?

Phil: Well, Rock Hall was the main bootlegger. You know, his son's on the Utah Supreme Court.

KI: Who is that?

Phil: I don't know his name, he's Rock Hall's son.

The Ruples had a place right there where you cross Brush Creek, they bootlegged. Used to go up there and Mr. Ruple, say, ask him how much it was and he'd say, "Eight or ten, according to shots."

KI: Was that whiskey or was that beer?

Phil: Whiskey. Some of it would take the paint off a car.

KI: Now there's a good topic, tell me about cars.

Phil: Well, my dad run over me with one, broke my leg right here, I got a scar up here where the bone come out through the flesh. He set it, set this leg, and there's no difference. My mother said he used to measure it several times a day. He set it and it's always been perfect.

I don't know what, I think it was called the National, but they had a lot of different cars. Oakrun and Orange, and Marquette. Herb Snyder sold the Durrant.

KI: What was your favorite car?

Phil: Buick, I think. The favorite car I had was a Pontiac. I had several Pontiacs when I got older.

KI: When you were a teenager did you have a car?

Phil: Yes, my mother had a Model T Coupe. One seat. I took it up to Brush Creek fishing. I went down in the gorge and I didn't have enough gas to come back out so I had to back out of there. I had a deer in it and that was something. Chuck Henderson had that Cobble Rock Service Station, that was when the monument was in the middle of town. I would go around that monument and throw a tire off as I would wheel right on around right into Chuck's station. I would be going pretty fast.

We run into the monument one night. Wills Duke, his dad was Ray Duke, manager of Penney's, he and my wife and George Davis and Don Jensen, we had been to a dance and his dad had just bought a new Chrysler. That was the year they came with hydraulic brakes. We were coming up to the monument and Wills said, "Do you want to see how these new hydraulic brakes work?" "Yeah." He wound it up and headed for that monument and pushed down on those brakes and he didn't have any. He just demolished that car, broke the windshield. I had my arms around my wife and I pushed her down and that windshield went right over her head. Cut slices in the guys' hats in the back. She would have got all that right in her face. Anyway, they took that back to the factory, it was demolished.

He was later killed down here, he and Dal Hatch, a Slaugh girl, and a Davis schoolteacher was killed down here on the this bridge [the bridge on the Upper Canal on the Maeser road], coming from a dance over west. They hit an icy spot and hit one of those big cottonwood trees that were there, killed all four of them.

KI: So what other garages were in town that you remember?

Phil: Well, there used to be a garage right there on the corner, of white brick, right there on the corner where the cobble rock station is. Then later, Newton brothers moved in there, and then they finally tore it down. There was that garage, and then George Slaugh had a garage right below that—and he had a ramp that went on up to the second floor. It was on South Vernal Avenue. He had that ramp, he was quite an old guy. He had a ranch, or a farm, but anyway, they tell a story about him.

He had this ramp and he started down it and he didn't have any brakes and they had a big door that operated on air. He went through that and right over and he hit the Confectionary over across the street.

They told the story about him. He was counting sheep and the gate come open and they started coming through and he said: "And another and another and another and another."

KI: So when your mom had this business, the one where she had the novelty shop, was that on Main Street?

Phil: No, that was on Vernal Avenue. It was right next to the Confectionary.

KI: Okay, and then she moved? The Grill was up on Main Street?

Phil: The Grill was right next to the Co-op. In fact, we put that floor in there. It was black and orange. I wonder if it's still there.

KI: I've never known how big the Co-op was at that time.

Phil: Well, it was quite big. It took in two or three of those buildings that have been closed off. It took in where Thorne's Museum was, and they had a clothing department there.

KI: You told me about Prohibition, that was also during the Depression, the first few years of the Depression. Can you tell me about the Depression? Do you remember?

Phil: Oh, yes, yes. It was something else! You just didn't have any money at all. The banks of Vernal didn't close, but they were about the only places in the state of Utah that they didn't. Because they were closed all over.

KI: Why do you think they didn't close here?

Phil: Well, I don't know. Could've been the livestock business kept it open, because there was lots and lots of sheep. And I think that kept them open.

Oh, Ashton Brothers used to serve the sheep industry. All the sheep men got their groceries there, and they only got paid twice a year, when they sold their wool and their lambs. Ashton's carried 'em all that time.

KI: That was a really good thing that the Ashtons did for the community, don't you think?

Phil: Oh, yes, we'd've never made it without them. People didn't appreciate them. I had an account over there when I was a little kid. I bought my mother a set a dishes. Rae Ashton, he told me one time, "Philly," he called me Philly, "Philly, any time you need anything in this store, you come and get it." I was in there one night, I was come in from camp, and it was winter, oh, it was cold. And Lynn Ashton was his uncle, worked there, he called me over in the men's department and he said, "Philly, I want you to see this coat." It was a big, long, sheepskin coat. And he said, "Try it on," I said, "I couldn't afford that coat!" And he said, "Try it on anyway." Rae come in. I didn't know he was standing behind me, and he says, "You want that coat, Philly?" And I said, "I can't afford that coat." He says, "You take that coat if you need it. You can pay for it when you want to, if you can." And I didn't take it, but I could've. That's the kind of people they were.

KI: What was that store like? What was it like to shop there?

Phil: Oh, it was wonderful. If you were going to camp, you put in a big order of supplies, and they'd do them at night. They had a night man, and he'd put them up at night, and when you'd get to camp, there would always be a big sack of candy. When you went in to pay your bill, you got a new Stetson hat or something like that.

KI: They would just give it to you?

Phil: That was a wonderful place to trade.

KI: During the Depression, were you already working with the sheep?

Phil: I was in the café. We sold turkey dinners for seventy-five cents. Our T-bone steak was seventy-five cents.

KI: What else did you serve there?

Phil: Pork chops, all that kind of stuff. We served a meal, roast pork, roast beef. We had a nice kitchen.

KI: Well, if that was there during the Depression, would you have very many people who would come in and eat?

Phil: Oh, yes. We used to have the Lions Club come there once a week for a banquet. I was on duty one morning early and someone knocked at the front door, and I went out and there was five guys in a car. They had been asleep out in front. I let them in. I found out they had come from California and were going to Rangely to drill the first oil well. They were the crew. They came in and ate lots of times. I met them all and got to be friends with them. They drilled the first oil well in Rangely. It was what the California Company did at that time.

KI: And after that, there got to be lots and lots of oil people out here?

Phil: They plugged that one in for quite a few years before they went out and started drilling again. That was during the war.

KI: Would that have been the late 1930s?

Phil: Yes, around there.

KI: What year did you marry your wife?

Phil: 1933.

KI: So, by the time the war came along, did you go?

Phil: Yeah, I was in the Navy. I was on a carrier in the Navy. I was in one of the worst typhoons they ever had on record. Off of the Philippines. Three destroyers went down—broke in two.

KI: You were on a carrier during the typhoon, you weren't on land?

Phil: I was out there on a ship. The flight deck lay on the edge of the water for seventeen hours and they couldn't straighten it up. It was something. Seven hundred people lost in those three ships that went down.

KI: Did you serve the entire war?

Phil: I got out in 1946. But I didn't go in till 1943.

KI: Were you drafted?

Phil: Yeah.

KI: What was your job?

Phil: I was working out at Geneva at that time, but I'd been working down at the Pacific States Cast Iron Pipe. My brother was a foreman down there. It was down in Provo, between Provo and Springville. I wouldn't have been drafted if I'd stayed there on that job, but I was getting tired of it. I went down when they were building Geneva, and they were paying high wages. I went down there, and that's when I was drafted. We was out there just a year. And we moved back here then.

KI: So you served until Japan surrendered?

Phil: Yes, I served in the South Pacific. I don't know how many islands I've been to. I've been to a lot of them. A lot of them I wasn't in, but been on shore.

KI: Did you have a lot of frightening experiences, being in the war?

Phil: That typhoon was about the worst. I was in two typhoons. That one was something. There wasn't a thing you could do; you weren't scared at the time, but after you were. Those planes were just breaking those cables. Planes were just spiraling in the air and blowing off that flight deck. And we lost them all.

KI: Did that leave you vulnerable to Japanese attack?

Phil: Yes, yes.

KI: Were you attacked?

Phil: No. There wasn't anybody out in that typhoon—couldn't see through it. We were alone.

KI: So, when you came back out of the service, what did you do?

Phil: I worked at Rangely for a while, straightening drill pipe.

KI: Who did you work for?

Phil: Guy by the name of Cotton, he was a Texan. Tom Herbert and I worked for him. Worked in Wyoming or wherever there as derricks, straightening pipe.

KI: Why would you have to straighten pipe?

Phil: Well, they'd been bent and dropped, some of it.

KI: And then, what did you do after that?

Phil: I guess I probably I went into the trucking business not too long after that. I borrowed money from my mother and my brother to buy my first truck.

KI: And how many trucks did you eventually have?

Phil: I had sixteen big trucks, diesels. Seven or eight pickups.

KI: Well, that's a pretty big fleet, isn't it, for out here? And you had that business for over forty years?

Phil: Forty-three. I had myself and I kept two mechanics all the time and office staff. Later on, it got a little bit annoying. I got where I would take it easy, though. I'd go up to the cabin. Lucy goes up there all the time.

KI: When did you build the cabin?

Phil: 1960.

KI: Is that anywhere near where Dr. Seager's cabin is?

Phil: Same place. He built his and I built mine next.

KI: And then Chuck and Lillian Henderson, they built one there, too?

Phil: No, they didn't. Their daughter was up there. But Chuck and Lillian used to go up there all the time. We had more fun with Chuck and Lillian.

KI: I hear so many stories about those two.

Phil: We hunted out in Book Cliffs, the two of us, and we went to Wyoming hunting antelopes several times.

KI: Sounds like you really enjoyed hunting.

Phil: I did. I have a wonderful selection of guns. They're right there; you can see some of them right in there.

KI: I'll look when I walk out there. What kind of guns do you like?

Phil: Well, we used to do all our own loading of our own ammunition. I like several guns. I got some Browning guns, some over-and-unders. They're really fancy guns. Kim's husband, Jay, he's been using some of them. I must have ten or twelve guns out here.

KI: Did you do your own re-loading?

Phil: Yes.

KI: Were you ever a member of the Lions Club or one of the other civic organizations?

Phil: No. I'm a charter member of the Masonic Lodge. I belonged to the Shrine for years.

KI: They've got a pretty active Masonic Lodge here now, don't they?

Phil: I guess. I just dropped out. I got old. Fran Felch and a lot of us—all my folks belonged to the Masonic Lodge, my dad and all my brothers.

KI: So you didn't join the Chamber of Commerce?

Phil: No, no. I went fishing.

KI: Did you play those slot machines, though, when the Jaycees had the slot machines out in town?

Phil: We had one in the Grill. I used to empty it and get me a big pile of nickels, then go and play them all back trying to win the jackpot.

KI: Did it ever work?

Phil: Once in a while I'd win it, but I'd play a lot back in usually. I don't know what happened to that machine. Chuck Henderson got me one. He had them with those aluminum deals in them.



He gave me one and I had it for a while, and it got so it wouldn't work. He wanted it to fix it, and he took it back to fix, and he never gave it back. He apologizes every time he sees me.

KI: You know, it's illegal to have those machines.

Phil: I know it is. He changed them over, you know. They paid those aluminum tokens of some kind, for tourists. I gave Chuck a lot of my hats. I had a lot of hats, and Chuck wore the same size. It was two or three years ago he was up here.

KI: Do you remember any controversial issues in the community, like when they wanted to put the Echo Park Dam in, for example? Do you remember what that was like in the community?

Phil: Well, not really. I can't remember just for sure what the drawback was on that to start with.

KI: Well, the Sierra Club didn't want it.

Phil: Yeah, that was the main reason, that's right, I remember now.

KI: But that is how they finally ended up getting Flaming Gorge. Because they changed their request from Echo Park to Flaming Gorge.

Phil: See, I built my cabin up there. We built my cabin when they were building that dam. We used to sit and watch 'em build that dam.

KI: What was that like?

Phil: Oh, it was really something. They let that cement down, and how that guy could tell where he was putting it was something else. He was way up there in that crane. He'd let that bucket down and pour it, and it was a long ways. They had that road built way over on the other side, you know, that they built just for people to watch them. I've spent a lot of time fishing up there.

KI: Did you ever go horseback?

Phil: Oh, yes, we kept horses up to the cabin. We had five pair up there at one time. We always had three or four. I had Sody [Duane Soderquist] make me two beautiful saddles. He's known all over the country for his saddles. I gave them to Kim and Bob. They sold them a while back. They were beautiful saddles. I've still got some spurs up to the cabin and some chaps that go back to the 1920s.

KI: What did your cabin look like? How many rooms did you build?

Phil: There's a bathroom and a half and it's carpeted all over. I got a great, huge, rock fireplace, and a big rock chimney.

KI: Did you collect the rocks yourself?

Phil: No, I got 'em over at Chews', over on Blue Mountain. They got a quarry over there. There's a huge kitchen and a bar and a back porch with two beds in it. It's nice, it's carpeted. It's logs. The logs I used are tongue and groove. They were made over in Grand Junction. And then on the inside I had it lined with oriental ash.

KI: Sounds beautiful. I can understand why you would want to go up there. I know Dr. Seager still spends a lot of time at his cabin.

Phil: Yeah, he's got a little dinky place.

KI: That's what he said, it's pretty small, I talked to him. What other doctors do you remember, in town?

Phil: Dr. Franke. He was a wonderful doctor.

KI: Did he move into the house where your family had been living, the one there by Inkley's, or did you live there the whole time?

Phil: I lived there, I sold it myself, after my mother died. My son lived there for a while. I went down there, and that was a beautiful home. All hardwood floors. Kids had got in there and were breaking things up, chandeliers were broken, and it was awful and I tried to get somebody to tear it down for boards. And there was a girl, her folks had worked for my mother cleaning, a housekeeper. She got it. She lived right near the yard, so she and her husband bought it. I sold it to her for practically nothing And then that lot there, where Drollinger built that office building, I sold them that.

KI: Did your brothers stay here, or did they all move away?

Phil: No, they all moved away.

KI: How long did your mom keep her business, was it the café that she kept for the longest time?

Phil: She had that novelty hat shop for the longest time. I can't remember how many years we did have it. Well, we had it ten years, I guess.

KI: And then she just kind of supported herself after all you boys grew up.

Phil: Oh, yeah. I don't know how she did it. I don't know yet how she raised us boys and kept that place and the ranch. I just don't know. But she worked around somehow. She kept rooms, she rented rooms, in that big house, and she kept going that way. But she was a wonderful person. I never did ask her how to pronounce a word, or how to spell it, that she didn't answer me. She was smart as a whip. 'Course, she was a college graduate.

KI: She did go to college. Do you know where?

Phil: Back in Illinois someplace.

KI: Is that where she was born?

Phil: Yes.

KI: How about your dad? Where did he go to medical school?

Phil: Northwestern.

KI: Where was he from?

Phil: He was from Illinois.

KI: Why did he come out here, do you know?

Phil: Oh, I don't know, he just come out west. He went up to Wisconsin first. He knew the Sathers up in Wisconsin. Bob's dad.

KI: I'm looking at your parents' wedding certificate.

Phil: What year was that?

KI: 1902. They were married in Monticello, Illinois, on the third of September. Thank you for letting me see that. There are all kinds of fun little pieces of paper and photographs around here.

Phil: I dug a lot of it out so you could. There's a lot of stuff here. I guess there still is.

KI: If you were the only son to stay here, I imagine that you would have ended up with a lot of your mom's little things.

Phil: Yeah, a lot of it disappeared.

KI: That's too bad. Do you remember what kind of chores you had to do at home when you were a boy?

Phil: Yes, I had a lawn to mow every weekend and I had a bathroom to clean and mop every weekend. The other brothers had the same thing, they had their different rooms they had to clean. And then, we had to clean the furnace every two or three months.

KI: Is that because you burned coal?

Phil: Yeah.

KI: What would you do with it when you cleaned it out?

Phil: You'd just take it out, beat the soot out of the pipe, and put her back up and you'd be

covered with it. Seems like we had our old clothes we'd put on to go do it. There was one pipe, especially, that was that way.

KI: Were you guys pretty cooperative with your mom?

Phil: Yes, we loved our mother.

KI: She sounds like a great lady. What did she cook that you especially liked?

Phil: Oh, everything. I've gone down there in the middle of the night, and she would be up and I'd say, "Mother, what in the world are you doing up?" "Well, I got to thinking about some hot cakes. I thought, I'll just go down and fix me some." I've caught her a lot of times down there in the night, a-cooking something. But she made pies that were out of this world. She made everything! She used to make fruitcakes and give away at Christmastime. I don't know. She'd make probably a hundred.

KI: Did she work in the Grill very much?

Phil: She just took care of the cash register.

KI: She hired someone else to cook?

Phil: Yeah, one of my brothers cooked in the daytime and I cooked at night.

KI: Did your brothers ever make it through high school?

Phil: Oh, yes. My one brother didn't graduate from high school, my two brothers went out to the university. The third stayed in medicine, then the Depression come along and he couldn't make it and he quit. One of them went to Texas to work in the oilfield. He married a girl from Florida.

KI: I'm trying to think of other things that might be interesting. Tell me about the ice house.

Phil: Oh, the ice house that was down to the creamery? They used to put ice up, you know. That was before they had refrigerators. Did you know Ken Aycock?

KI: I know who he is.

Phil: His dad, Bob Aycock, was the iceman. He had his outfit and he had some scales hanging on the back, and his icepick, and he'd come and look in your refrigerator and go back out and chip you off a chunk of ice that just fit. He'd call on you every two or three days. But anyway, there was ice houses down there at the creamery—you know where the creamery was [approximately 760 North Vernal Avenue], where Calder's Pond was? They put up ice in just great, huge, blocks. We used to go down there and play all the time. I fell off the top of one of those ice houses one time. Anyway, that's where they'd put up that ice. We had a refrigerator, or icebox, that was just about new, and it was down in the basement down at the old home, and it come up missing. I don't know where it went to. We'd had a refrigerator for years. But we had that, we just kept it. I would kind of liked to had it. I don't know what I'd do with it.

KI: Why did you like playing down at the ice house?

Phil: I don't know. We used to go down there with Howard Calder. We'd go down there and they would be bottling pop and we'd drink pop, and then we'd eat ice cream. We used to go down and swim, too, it was Calder's Pond.

KI: They used to cut that ice out of the pond in the winter, didn't they?

Phil: Cut or saw it, and haul it out and put it up in that ice house.

KI: How would they keep it frozen during the summer?

Phil: Cover it up with sawdust.

KI: Which they got from the mill?

Phil: Yeah. And they washed it off and picked it. They furnished the town with ice. Living down in our old home—the farmers hauling ice in their wagons—you could hear them for half a mile, the wheels squealing on that frozen ground. They'd come out walking along, swinging their arms to keep warm; taking ice home to their ice houses.

The old Uinta Railway wagons used to pass there, too. There were garages with barns, you know, down there by the old mill. In that big pasture, that's where they kept their horses, but they used to pass there, those double wagons, coming from Watson.

I crossed that ferry, too, one time with a bunch of sheep. The ferry down on Green River. It was down below Jensen there a ways. Alhandra, I think they called it. We were taking a bunch of sheep out to White River to put in some others. We put them on there. I can't remember if it was on a cable. I know a sheep jumped off. They had a rowboat on there, and they got in that rowboat and went and got the sheep.

KI: Do you remember how much you used to sell wool for?

Phil: Oh, different prices, I don't know. We used to ship our lambs to Denver. I topped the market the one year for eleven cents. That's not very much. We sold them for five cents one year! Five cents a pound. Just for the lambs. Wool used to go up to thirty, forty cents.

KI: Who would buy it from you?

Phil: They had wool buyers come out from back east, Boston or different places where they had big woolen mills.

KI: What did you have to do with the wool after you sheared your sheep?

Phil: Just put it someplace and wait till they bought it, and they'd move it.

KI: They'd do the cleaning, and the baling, and all that?

Phil: Oh, yes. They used to stack it there by the Uinta Railway office, you know where that is. We used to play on it. I played all over town. I had my places I'd go when I knew the women were baking bread, Mrs. Davis and Mrs. Witbeck. They'd always have a big piece of warm bread with honey on it, and I'd manage to make it there.

KI: What did the downtown look like when you were a little boy? Didn't they used to have an open ditch that ran along one side of Main Street?

Phil: The city ditch used to run down. They covered it pretty well. It was open just down below the Vernal Hotel. There wasn't any pavement, it was all dirt roads.

KI: And there weren't any sidewalks?

Phil: No. Oh, yes, there were sidewalks uptown.

KI: What were those sidewalks made out of?

Phil: I think they were asphalt, they always had that pit up here.

KI: They didn't have boardwalks?

Phil: Oh, no.

KI: I heard that when that asphalt got hot, ladies heels would sink into it.

Phil: It would. When they paved the center of town, they had a big dance that night. And I practically wore a pair of shoes out, scraping them on that pavement, dancing. It was like putting them on a grinding wheel.

KI: They just paved that one intersection, didn't they?

Phil: Yes, to start with. They just paved the center of the streets. They left both sides muddy and if it would storm, you get off that pavement, you get down on next to that curb, and you probably get stuck.

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KI: You'd sink into the mud. Do you remember buggies?

Phil: We had a buggy and we had "Old Ted." I remember when we went to Jensen one day to visit the Snows in that buggy.

KI: How did you keep yourself warm in a buggy like that in the winter?

Phil: I didn't go in the winter. They'd take rocks, hot rocks, the same way they did in the

automobiles, and they'd hang a lantern under a quilt on the radiator to keep it from freezing.

KI: I read a story one time that said that people used to ride their horses from their houses down to John Pope's livery stable. They would get their cars that they stored there and leave their horses behind for the day, and they'd drive around in their cars. Then they'd come back and get their horses, and take their horses home.

Phil: Oh, I never heard of that.

KI: Maybe it was before your time. It could be.

Phil: Yeah, John Pope had a garage. It was down there about where Showalter's is.

KI: Here's a paper, says "The City of Vernal." And it's got a picture of Central School, and a picture of the courthouse on it. But the letter is addressed to M.R., Mrs. Manfred R.

Kim: Your mother must have been in Illinois, your dad's writing a letter to her. It's on City of Vernal stationery, dated 1910.

Phil: They used to have a big day on May Day down to the courthouse, bobbing for apples and braiding the Maypole. That was a big day. They would braid several Maypoles, and it was just a big celebration. Fourth of July was a big day, too. There was a siren up on top of the Co-op. At daylight, they used to turn that damn thing on. You could hear it all over the valley.

KI: Why was it there?

Phil: The fire. If there was a fire in town, they let it run for quite a while.

KI: So, what other days were special days? Can you tell me about your Christmases?

Phil: Oh, we had good Christmases. You didn't get a lot of things, you got things you needed, like some clothes, or something. I remember one time, I got a box of .410 shotgun shells, and God, I was tickled to death. I liked to hunt. I'd fish when I was a kid. And that was one of the biggest presents I could've had. I went out there where Paul Batty's house is, up west there's a canal up there. My brother and I went up there, and Art Brown. And there's two big old mallards come sailing over me, and I shot, and they were about as high as this roof. And all that was left was the tips of the wings and the legs. I took it home, and my mom said she'd cook it. But I just blew it all to pieces. I hunted for years. I killed lots and lots of deer and elk. We'd put it in the freezer.

KI: Never bottled it?

Phil: My mother bottled sage chickens one time up in Colorado. We had our sheep at Slater, Colorado. Sage chickens are the real thing up there. George Kessler worked for us. He and I went out, and I think we killed sixty-three. We cleaned them all, and my mother canned. I don't know whether we ever ate them or not.

KI: Do you remember N.J. Meagher?

Phil: Oh, yes. I remember borrowing money from him. He treated me wonderful for a while, till he got old and got changed. Don Barr worked there. Mr. Meagher would say, "There's your man. Go in there and get what you want." That's what I'd do for quite a while.

One time I went in there and I said, "I got to have some money for a while." I think it was sixty-eight hundred dollars, and he told me to go in there and get it, so I got it. In about three or four days after that I was in there, and I went in and he said, "I gotta have that money." And I said, "What do you mean you gotta have it?" I said, "If I could have gone that long, I wouldn't have borrowed it to start with." He said, "I want it." And that's when he started to get a little "off his rocker."

So I went out, and Harold Reeder was standing out in front of there, he never did like N.J. And he says, "What's the matter, Phil? You look kinda down in the dumps." And I said, "That crazy old man. I just borrowed some money from him, and now he wants it back." And he says, "What are you going to do about it?" I said, "I don't know what I'm going to do about it. I haven't got it right now." He said, "How much would it take to get them off your back?" I says, "About twenty thousand dollars." He said, "Come up to the house this afternoon." So I went up there, he paid the bank off, and I moved over to the other bank.

He was, he was *awful* good to me. And Nick was *real* good to me.

KI: What else was down there, on that same side of the street with the Bank of Vernal?

Phil: Well, the bakery was down on the end of the street there, Burt Evans. He used to make the best cinnamon rolls in the country. He sold it to [Lamar] Hawkins, then went into the furniture business after that.

I went to school one year, they had a building right next to it. I can't remember why we had to go there. But anyway, it was right next to it. And I'd go over there, and Burt and I were good friends, we used to go swimming together. 'Course, he was a grown man, I was just a kid. I'd go over there, and he'd get a big bottle of cold milk out, and a stack of those cinnamon rolls just out of the oven, man, they were good. I'd go in there and eat.

Art Brown, he'd climb up that on the school building roof and drop thirty-four rifle ammunition down into that stove and they'd bounce around a couple of times, and then, Boom! They'd let us out of school. He did that several times, or he'd drop a wet sack down the chimney to smother the fire and make it smoke so we could get out of school.

KI: Wasn't the City Bakery down South Vernal Avenue?

Phil: Yes. It's torn down now.

KI: What was down Main Street?

Phil: On Main Street was the old Gibson Hotel. There was quite a string of [shops]. Irvin Eaton had a butcher shop right up there about where Les Ashton store was. There was a roadway, too, there. It went out and behind the Co-op. There's a huge hitching post.



KI: Behind the Co-op or behind Ashton's?

Phil: Well, behind both. That was before Ashton moved over to other side of the street. For a while it was A.K., Ashton-Kelley, and then Kelly moved and bought the store in Jensen. That's when Les Ashton turned his store to, Ray [his brother] took it over. But they had a huge hitching post out in back there instead of a parking lot. That's where they left their buggies, and horses. But there was a roadway through there, just between the hotel there, and those buildings. Lawrence Allen had a Chevrolet dealership right there in one of those buildings.

KI: You think about the way dealerships are now, where you've got the big lots, and then you consider what they used to be like, just right there on Main Street practically.

Phil: Irvin Eaton had an icehouse out back there. Then there was a Comet Motor back there behind. They run between Vernal and Craig. And that's all torn down. Rulon Bullock and I washed cars for Lawrence Allen back by the icehouse. They had a rack out there and I'll tell you, if you washed a car in those days, you didn't do it in just a little while. You got one of those that came in from Rangely, it took you all day to get the mud off from it. The roads weren't paved and it was mud clear through. We had a hose, but we had to dig most of it off.

There was a Commercial Club upstairs by the hotel.

KI: How about saloons?

Phil: Beer joints? Oh, there was a lot of them. Usually six or seven in Vernal. They played poker in most of them. Poker and sub.

KI: Was that legal?

Phil: Yes. Squirrely Siddoway, Ralph Siddoway, when he got mayor he kind of closed gambling down. There were four or five beer joints in town. I went there. They played cards and I used to play pool quite a bit.

KI: You would have been less than twenty when Prohibition came along. So by the time Prohibition was over, that's when they would have put all those pool halls up?

Phil: During Prohibition they were up. They could sell beer, I guess. It was just whiskey.

KI: What was your favorite place to go?

Phil: It depends on what you were going to do. If you were going to play pool, there would be one that had better tables, or one that you liked to play cards in. You would go to all of them. Some of them were pretty dirty especially when the Indians got to coming over. Bill Weeks had one down by the Gateway, I don't remember the name of it. It was just a pretty rotten place. Usually the guy who had it was the name it went by. Kempton's. John Jorgensen had a good place. He had older stockmen. The old Stockman's Club was upstairs in the Bank of Vernal. That was one of the first clubs. You had to be kind of a member. Al Hatch had a place. There was a place below the Vernal Drug. Taft McNaughton had a place. Lonnie McCarrell had a place. Bill

Collier had a place.

KI: Where did your wife shop?

Phil: She shopped at Ashton's. We got about everything there. They were nice people to deal with.

KI: Were you a member of a church that you attended regularly?

Phil: I was baptized in the Kingsbury Congregational Church. My mother was Episcopalian. She didn't go to church. She was a well-read person. She didn't go to church. She didn't have time to go to church. She kept the Grill open every day and all night.

I had a good life. Hunting and fishing was a big part of my life. I had a lot of time out on the range with the sheep. I pulled camp with a pack string when I was fifteen, that is, packing five head of mules. You have to know what you're doing. Those packs will turn. Knowing how to get them on even. You know what I'm talking about? Pack saddles. There are things that go in a certain place and on a certain horse.

KI: How many sheep did you have when you had the most? And were they hard to keep track of?

Phil: A thousand, twelve hundred. They aren't hard to keep track of when they are in a herd. If you drop some, you lose them, but you find them. Our brand was M Double Bar. We branded on the back. We earmarked them, too. No, we didn't have trouble with rustling. You can drop a bunch of sheep, though, and if certain people pick them up, they will get them.

In Colorado they don't recognize an earmark, they recognize a brand. In Utah they recognize both. I dropped a bunch going into Colorado one year and some Greeks picked them up and they went into a shearing corral and got the brand off from them and I never did get them back.

KI: Do you remember anything about the range wars with the cattlemen?

Phil: Yes. That's when I was a kid on Blue Mountain. When they killed that herder and killed the sheep. They didn't want the sheep to get started. They didn't want the sheep taking any of the range. The cattlemen wanted their own range. Sheep are harder on the grass, but not if your herder takes care of them right and not let them overgraze.

KI: How long do sheep have to stay out on the range like that?

Phil: Well, in spring, we used to lamb about the tenth or twelfth of May. We used to ship the second week in September, then we would come down to winter range. Winter range was out here in sagebrush country with a camp and a herder. We would have to feed them sometimes if there was a hard winter. We would feed cotton cake made out of cotton and other stuff. It's a feed. We would feed corn, too.

